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ABSTRACT

This article discusses a university-public school partnership involving 10 school sites, which have become professional development schools (PDSs). These PDSs contribute to a continuum of professional development for educators at all levels: preservice teachers, inservice teachers, public school administrators, and teacher educators. Professional development schools provide opportunities to redefine roles and relationships between and among preservice teachers, inservice teachers, college faculty, and elementary and secondary students. Three strategies, which have made important contributions to successful efforts to implement collaborative professional development at the sites, are outlined: engaging in inquiry, building a team spirit, and mutual critique. A collaborative strategy and structure for inquiry that was implemented is described: a team consisting of preservice teachers, inservice teachers, and college faculty worked together to build the language arts and social studies methods course curriculum in ways that link the elementary school curriculum to the college curriculum. Examples of the following program features and efforts are also outlined: building a team spirit in the college classroom, planning and debriefing time for cooperating teachers and their preservice students; and professor-researchers becoming learners in their own classrooms. (IAH)

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A Continuum of Professional Development

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Multiple Levels of Collaboration in Professional Development Schools: A Continuum of Professional Development

Redefining Teaching and Learning Roles in a Collaborative Setting

The setting for this reflection-on-practice is unique in the United States--a university/public school partnership in which 10 school sites have agreed to contribute to a continuum of professional development by becoming **Professional Development Schools (PDS).** Our reflections in this symposium are based on some assumptions about the developmental needs of educators at all levels. First, *preservice teachers* must develop the kinds of generative relationships with peers, inservice teachers or professors which could foster critical awareness of their own needs as learners and as teachers. Second, *inservice teachers* have only just begun to recognize, value and share their professional expertise in colleagial relationships with preservice teachers and professors. Third, *public school administrators* must take an active role in developing and supporting preservice programming at their school sites, other than opening their classrooms to student teachers. Fourth, *teachers educators* must engage in the kind of shared planning which allows them to meet each other's needs. Both theorists and practitioners now question

whether the top-down approach to staff development can produce lasting and positive results. Many educators today see collaborative partnerships at all levels as a better means for transforming American's schools. We have begun to see these partnerships as a *continuum of staff development* which can be fostered through overt strategies and structures in the university and in public schools.

Professonial Development Schools--the arena for study and reflection for this symposium--offer a wide-angle lens for seeing both the individual partnerships and the larger picture of collaboration in this continuum of staff development in action.

Redefining Teaching/Learning Roles in a Collaborative Setting

Educators such as Goodlad, Sarason, and Schlechty see collaborative partnerships at all levels as a means for transforming America's schools. In our setting have begun to see these partnerships as communities of learners that can be developed through particular strategies and structures which redefine roles at the university level, among colleagues, and in classrooms.

In a collaborative setting, the whole notion of professional development is redefined because the expectations for interaction among the stakeholders promote more cross-fertilization of ideas than in typical

practicum sites. In-service days, staff development seminars, and university classes have been the tradition strategies and structures for promotion of improved teaching among those already in the field--**inservice teachers**; however, professional development schools connected to a university school of education provides a unique, living, breathing setting for new views of staff development. For example, teachers working with undergraduates serve as mentors and critics trying out new ideas and strategies with their partners. There is teaming between inservice and preservice teachers that allows for both to be teacher and learner. **Preservice teachers** often bring skills, ideas, and strategies into the school setting that are new for teachers. Together they adapt the ideas to particular classroom settings. The roles of "novice" and "expert" shift as preservice teachers assume more responsibility and demonstrate their talents. Collegiality describes many of the relationships. The **children** in some school sites are working on school goals of teamwork, appreciation of difference, and responsibility. These goals mesh well with the growing sense of collegiality at all levels. The children search for literature and research materials on topics that they and teachers have decided to study; the preservice teachers prepare for activities and skills lessons to complement the units of study; the

college professors demonstrate skills, provide literature, monitor, teach, provide additional hands for projects, and generally facilitate the unfolding of curriculum in the elementary school classrooms in which their students are part of the team. This kind of professional developmen -immediate and contextualized to the site--is more effective than either the decontextualized inservice training so common in public schools or the isolated methods courses common in schools of education.

Successful efforts in collaborative professional development do not come about by chance *or* mandate. Committed team members pay their dues in a variety of ways. We have found several of these "dues paying strategies" indispensible for these joint efforts: engaging in inquiry, building a team spirit, and mutual critique and evaluation.

Strategies and Structures for Collaboration: An Example

One semester, seven teachers in one of our sites volunteered to work with teams of preservice teachers in language arts and social studies methods over the course of the semester. The goal was that students, teachers, and professors build the college methods course curriculum together--to find ways to link the elementary school curriculum with the college curriculum. College student teams developed interviews regarding the curriculum of their college methods courses to take to the schools.

They interviewed teachers, children, the principal, the chapter one teacher, the media specialist, the foster grandparents, instructional assistants, and anyone else in the school who would talk to them about what they needed to know about reading and language arts and social studies. For example, an interview question might be, "What is the most effective way to teach reading to first graders?"

During the initial two-day interview process, college team members taught the inservice teachers classes using lessons they had prepared in other methods classes. The teachers were interviewed for an hour and then were released for a precious planning time. The students returned to their college classrooms, discussed the interviews, decided on the "major" and "minor" topics and skills they needed. The students and the professor then made the calendar. The teachers and their elementary school students, meanwhile, discussed units of study in social studies they would like to pursue. Those chosen topics would become the content of the work with the preservice teachers in later in the semester. Teams of four college students were matched with each of seven teachers and written correspondance between the college age and elementary school children began.

Building a Team Spirit

Overt strategies for team building provide a useful way to build the context for profssional development. Traditional use of public schools by schools of education at universities has often produced less than a collegial spirit between public school teachers and college professors. College methods professors, having "farmed" students out to be supervised by "cooperating" teachers, rarely set foot in the public schools thereafter and do little to create the kinds of relationships that would foster multi-leveled professional development. This hierarchical relationship maintains the status quo and does little for experimentation and mutual critique of our different but overlapping spheres of teaching and learning. In order to "improve teaching" in this scenario, the hierarchy again appears in the way of mandated one-shot inservice days. The onus is on the inservice teacher to improve teaching, supervise preservice teachers' effort at teaching, and generally to keep the educational ship afloat. Little in this setting causes the college professor to challenge himself, to question his own teaching, or see his own classroom and that of "cooperating" public school teachers as worthy sites for research and change. The closest thing to "team spirit" is the afternoon supervisors' inservice in which the college professors let the teachers know what they

are supposed to do with the college students and how to keep records.

Building team spirit is labor intensive--college professors must work at it. When we knew our laboratory school was going to be shut down, we asked a local school if we could bring our students out for a semester. Andrews had conducted some writing workshops there with our Dean the year before. The teachers had had some contact with her and she felt she had established a good, though limited, working relationship. Several of the teachers agreed to take her students. Every time her students were in the school, she was in the school supervising or demonstrating. The mere fact of her presence went a long way toward establishing trust and respect--the elementary school setting, the children's needs, and the teachers' efforts were important enough for me to be there. A year later, when the local schools were invited to join the university as professional development schools, this school voted to join. There was by no means unanimity of consent, but gradually, over two years almost everyone is glad to be a part of a larger team effort in the education of children, college students, teachers, and college professors. We (teachers and professors) have written *America 2000 grants*, local grants, and teachers are becoming involved in research and grant writing. One teacher/professor pair (Smith and a teacher) has written a

collaborative grant for primary age mentoring--second graders reading to pre-schoolers and supplying books for the pre-schoolers to taked home. Smith began this venture by giving all teachers in our school a letter encouraging them to invite her into the classroom to help with prohjects they had been considering--projects that might need assistance from a university person with ore discretionary time to write a grant, think about research aspects, etc. Shortly thereafter, a second grade teacher gradded Smith in the hall and said, "Did you really mean what you said about helping us on prohects. I have one in mind!" A small grant has since funded has recently funded this community based project.

The message above is that *"teachers important projects are also university professors important projects."* If we attempting to truly live a collaborative model, the hierarchy dissolved and roles are modified, changed, and exchanged.

Further changes of role in this public school setting: Public school teachers are occasionally teaching university classes; professors are reading to kindergarten children, teaching demonstration classes, attending workshops and conferences *with* teachers, becoming members of public school committees. We professors, as co-learners and co-teachers, beling in that school; we have some ownership of the committees, the

projects, the teaching, and the students. We still have a long way to go in helping the teachers feel that the school of educatiopn at the university belongs to them.

Team building in the college classroom

The emphasis on and fascination with cooperative learning in recent years has alerted the field of education that group processes for the generation of ideas, the solving of problems, and the learning of information are valid and useful. Not only are they generative in ways that individual work cannot be, they highlight team members contributions to the knowledge base. Andrews & Wheeler (1993) write,

> Learning teams provide a kind of buffer zone between the typically perceived curriculum (i.e., text, syllabus, teacher lectures) and the actual curriculum (what really happens in the way of learning). What college students expect to happen in a classroom and what needs to be happening to support student interaction and ownership of the learning are often two very different things. Students expect the teacher to lecture, provide resources, and generally control the learning environment. The "craft knowledge" which would relegate all important information to a lecture given by the instructor is challenged by the learning team format because students are forced to recognize and come to value sources of information beyond the instructor and the text. (Teacher Educator, Winter, 1993)

Team building is a strategy that promotes role change. The ways in which we have our collaborative experience in the PDS site have enhanced even

further the varied roles of participants in the sites and enabled us to foster the development of different perspectives on the teaching/learning process. For example, teaming and the development of team spirit have allowed for meaningful peer observation and critique. Self-evalution and peer-evaluation can be risky business. Teaming gives the needed support. Many of our students choose to videotape lessons they are teaching because there is a supportive team of peers with whom to share insights on and critiques of their teaching. The critique of videotapes of teaching episodes allows preservice teachers in our program to change perspectives. The critiques take students to a new level of reflection on the teaching/learning process. Preservice teachers begin to act like, think like, and look like inservice teachers because the expectation is that they take responsibility for development of curriculum, plan, and work jointly and directly with teachers.

Planning and Debriefing Time

In our program, time is set aside for our inservice cooperating teachers to meet with our preservice students following their teaching time in the classroom. This time has been invaluable in helping students to get immediate feedback from experienced classroom teachers. The professors of the courses for which this is the field experience also join

the sessions. The interplay of theory and practice is these sessions is every methods professor's dream. As the teacher makes a point about the practical craft of teaching the lesson, about discipline, about organization, the professor can often find a way to help students see the "language theory" or the theoretical perspective on different ways of teaching reading or to point out levels of questioning and so forth. It is also wonderful for the "wholeness" and integration of the program that teachers and professors know each other's thinking and teaching well enough that they often can agree on issues that the college students raise--dispelling the "ivory tower" professor notion. It is not easy to protect this debriefing time in a public school setting. There are always needs of children and schools that take precedence over the preservice teachers' questions and needs. Sometimes, the professor or a graduate student will take the teacher's class for 30-45 minutes so that the teacher can spend this valuable time with the college students.

Professor-Researchers: Learners in Their own Classrooms

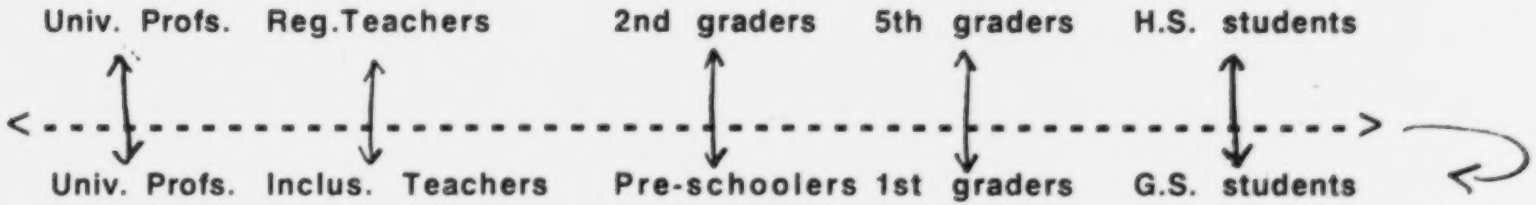
Teacher educators become redefined and refocused as learners in a PDS program because the expectation of them is that they are no longer the sole possessors of expertise in this setting. All participants are teachers and learners. We have consistently studied our own teaching, our

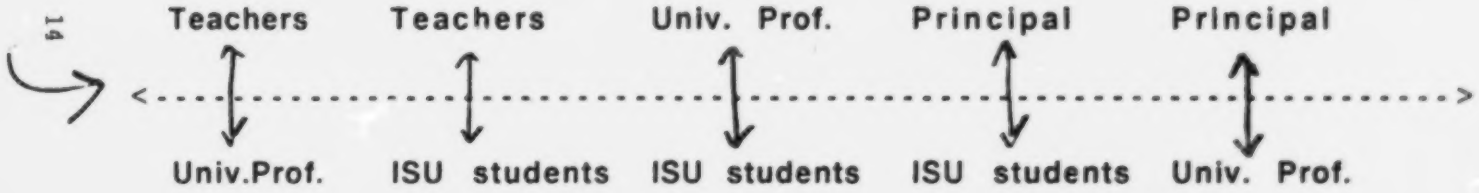
students reactions to learning teams, and their changes in belief about teaching over time. We do research on ourselves and on our students-- no one is exempt from doing research. In one recent semester the projects were varied and fascinating: students interviewed teachers in field site and with the professor of the course built the language arts curriculum based on the interviews; students and professors kept journals and wrote reflection papers on the impact of learning teams; students beliefs about teaching reading were correlated to a personal organizational style instrument; one professor worked with a second grade teacher to record data on the impact of a second grade read-aloud program in two local day care centers.

Redefining the Roles of Partners in a PDS Site

Professors have variously adopted the roles of demonstrators, model teachers with children, mentors for pre- and inservice teachers, facilitators of discussion, researchers and learners. *Teachers* in the field sites are now adopting the roles of professors. They teach some classes, lecture, give feedback on field experiences--in large group with discussion. *College students* are now assuming teaching roles, curriculum planning roles, interviewing and research roles.

Continuum of Professional Development in a Professional Development School





Collaboration: to co-labor such that the products and processes of that labor are mutually arrived at, mutually shared, mutually usable and profitable.

Evaluation:

- long-term commitment
- enthusiasm
- choice
- relationships form solid basis for continuation
- outcomes address mission/goals statements